1:Sanders Z-5/4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

Village Hygiene

364 [369] This closer contact with the ideas and the services of the city is helping overcome one of the negative aspects of village life from the survival standpoint, namely, its lack of adequate hygienic provisions. When Greek villages are judged in terms of what one finds in many rural settlements throughout the United States and Western Europe, they measure up fairly well. They have their expected quota of flies, their problems of sewage disposal, and the difficulties of obtaining pure drinking water, but these concerns are common to farm people in other parts of the world.

364 312 When, however, one measures the Greek village by scientific standards of public hygiene — and these should be the goal in the interest of better health for its people — then there are obvious shortcomings. According to *Medical and Sanitary Data on Greece*:

> many of the rural sections depend on small springs and hand-dug wells for their water supplies. These are usually isolated from inhabited areas and the water is not piped to the villages. It is quite common to see women carrying water in earthenware containers from sources as far as a mile from their homes.
>
> In semi-rural communities, particularly in the lowlands where underground water is more common, public wells, springs and private wells are often in use. Many private wells exist all over Greece and are sometimes the preferred sources of supply, even where safe piped supplies are provided. In some of the smaller Ionian and Aegean Islands and in a few villages in the northeastern Peloponnese and eastern Crete, the complete lack of any surface or underground water has compelled the population to depend on rain water collected from the roofs of their homes.
>
> Many private and public wells and many rural springs are open and unprotected from contamination which may be introduced by the human or animal population which it serves. . . . Even after collection, the water is frequently subject to contamination in containers. . . .[8]

The urban water supplies are more apt to be adequate with proper precautions taken for filtration and chlorination.[9]

364 514 A description of waste disposal is also contained in the report quoted above:

> For the disposal of human excreta in the rural areas of Greece either the pit privy or bored-hole latrines are utilized. Defecation on the ground is still widely practiced due to lack of sanitary facilities in residences and schools. However, the sanitary type of bored-hole latrine and pit privy has been installed under various programs at low cost to villagers in rural areas mainly as demonstration projects.[10]

164 ●165 In addition to the obvious visible signs of sanitation progress, one can learn much from the list of causes of death for Greece as a whole. Table 2 shows the first fifteen general causes of death for 1950. Some of the

1:Sanders Z-5,¼ (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

TABLE 2. CAUSES OF DEATH IN GREECE, 1950, BY NUMBER AND RATE

Cause of death	Number	Death rate (per 1000 people)
Heart disease	3270	.427
Cancer	2730	.358
Cerebral hemorrhage	2679	.352
Tuberculosis (respiratory)	2214	.293
Senility	1954	.258
Pneumonia	1523	.201
Nephritis	1284	.168
Violent accidents	1259	.165
Causes unknown	1166	.154
Congenital debility	998	.132
Diarrhea, enteritis	973	.128
Other tuberculosis	634	.083
Other diseases of digestive system	629	.082
Other infectious diseases	621	.081
Diseases of the liver	511	.067

Source: Mutual Security Agency Mission to Greece, *Medical and Sanitary Data on Greece* (Athens, 1952), p. 62 (mimeographed).

diseases which give the health authorities most cause for concern are tuberculosis, dysentery, typhoid and paratyphoid, venereal diseases, smallpox, various intestinal parasites, and particularly infectious hepatitis.

Of these causes of death, tuberculosis creates the greatest problem for those interested in preventive medicine, for it is commonly recognized that the reported death rate, 29.3 per 100,000 people, is probably less than half of the true figures. Greek peasants can therefore take small comfort in the fact that tuberculosis death rates in the urban areas are more than twice as high as those for rural districts, since this still means relatively high rates in the villages. Although the government is attacking tuberculosis with considerable vigor, the public response is only half-hearted. One of the first jobs of the UNRRA–World Health Organization mission after the war was to try to persuade the tuberculous to recognize their illness, to take treatment, and to realize that it was no disgrace to be ill.

However, in most families it is still considered a shame to have the disease, so much so that cases are hidden and doctors are even paid for not reporting cases to the public-health authorities. Although undernourishment is frequently associated with the high incidence of the disease, in Greece malaria has been a contributory cause by undermining resistance to the tuberculosis bacillus.

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957
EH1 Greece EH1
Paleo Corinthos

[Villages of the Plains]

face life on a smaller piece of land; but this problem does not seem especially acute to the larger farmers. An interesting indicator of this fact is that in 1956 only thirty boys from the village attended the gymnasium in New Corinth close by – a smaller number than Nea Eleftherohori was sending to a considerably more distant school, though the population of Old Corinth is nearly three times as great as that of the Macedonian village. As a matter of fact, the recent increases in the yield from Old Corinth's land have been so great that a new family can face life with equanimity, even owning only half as much land as their parents possessed.

For the landless segment of the population, and for those who own only a tiny plot insufficient to maintain a family anyway, the problem is quite different. Here the major consideration is not land but wages; and as long as there is work, and wages are comparatively good, the new generation can start off with little or nothing but a strong back and willing hands, and hope to make out about as well as their fathers have done. For them also, there is no overwhelming pressure to postpone marriage in order to keep up a standard of living.

As a result, the population statistics of Old Corinth do not show nearly so drastic a change from the prewar years as is evident in Nea Eleftherohori. Yet the birth rate has dropped in Old Corinth also. In the 1930's (when the population of the village was, of course, a good deal smaller) recorded births ranged between 58 and 46 each year. Since 1947 the range has been from 46 to 33. This change, however, has been nearly offset by a parallel drop in the death rate. Before the war, deaths averaged close to 30 each year; since 1947 the average has been a little over 12. The drop has mainly been due to the elimination of malaria through DDT; whereas Old Corinth was formerly one of the many places in Greece badly afflicted by that disease, there was no malaria in 1956.

/21 cont./ The
one crop farming in most cases develops many economic and social difficulties. The peddlers of finished goods in the villages absorb a large part of the trade. Usually in exchange for their goods they get live poultry and eggs.

The biological function. The morals are very strict in the village. In the grammar school the children are /22/ together but after the age of 15 one seldom finds boys and girls playing together. Only the close relatives have an approved right to dance with a girl or walk with her to the market. The boys get married at from 18-25 and the girls from 15 to 20 years of age. The period from 15 to 20 is spent by the girl in preparing her dowry. She is busy at the loom or in embroidery with the needle and thread. One of the desired qualities of the girl is to have her handmade stuff. The ultimate aim of the marriage is to have children. If it happens that she cannot have a child the first year of her married life then gossip will start in the village of her inability to bear a child. Just the way a farmer thinks about a cow not calving, so do the relatives and especially the father and mother-in-law. There is no limit as to the number of the children, as long as both husband and wife are healthy. The usual belief and excuse is, "God gave them and He will take care of them." Both young men and the young women are instructed as to their duties as fathers and mothers. Birth control has no place here. Nature takes care of it. The strongest of the children survive under the conditions that are available for living. Besides, to use any method of preventing birth to a child is thought to be an immoral act. Thus out of seven to eight children in a family about five survive up to the age of six and the rest /23/ die before then.

Size of families. The size of families varies in Megali Vrisi. One finds the largest numbers among Caucasians and the smallest among Thracians. The Caucasians used to live in compound families and still they stick to this idea even though it was broken down due to the new method of distribution of land. Even today one finds as large as 25 members in the family and as low as 3 members in the family. The compound family makes farming

/40 cont./

Vacation and Travel. There is no accepted idea of vacation. Vacation is only for the school children but during the end of harvest season when the farmer /41/ has money he takes his family to the city or to the international fair of Salonica. The men at such leisure times spend their weekends with their friends and relatives in remote villages. The cost of travel makes it hard for most, but their beast of burden, the donkey, serves as a means for this purpose. There is no one in the village who has not traveled in the two continents of Europe and Asia. Some of them have been to Germany, Hungary, Austria, Russia, and Turkey as prisoners in the First War. Some others due to deportation from one country to another, had an unbearable type of travelling. The Government railroads during holidays and early in the fall reduce the cost of train tickets by 50% and thus make it easier for many to travel.

One of the average farmers, with a family of four, spent for the year Drs. 1211 ($7.50) for travel. This sum covers 800 kilometers. The above shows the extensive travelling the men do mostly for business. It is during this travelling period that the farmer brings in and takes out from his village new seeds, new improved methods of cultivation and new customs and forms of community interests.

Protection of Health and Care of the Aged. If there is anything which is neglected in Megali Vrisi it is the /42/ health of the people. In spite of the medical center and the Near East Foundation Children's Nursery Center, where a health project was started, the extent of malaria, tuberculosis, pneumonia and intestinal diseases was just as great as before these agents came in. In fact in one of my surveys with which I tried to find out the death rate of young children from 3 months to 4 years old, four years before the Near East Foundation established itself and five years after its work, the figures of death rate to my surprise were amazingly larger than before, in spite of the Near East Foundation's efforts. After my eight years of experience with the farmers I was convinced of the inadequacy of the existing health program which was

/42 cont./
to fight the disease after it appeared rather than to cure the source of the disease. 744

The main causes for the death of children were the irregular feeding, intestinal diseases, malaria, lack of nutritive food and long hours of work of the parents that caused them to neglect their children. 164 165

Due to the cost of medicine the people called the doctor only when it is too late for him to do anything. "It was the will of God to give and take." This is the usual answer that one would hear. The cost of medical bills range from $12 to $35, even though the local doctor is free of charge. 758 [777] [511]

/43/ The care of the aged rests solely on their sons. According to tradition the aged are the head of the family until they die and due care and respect should be paid to them so as to get their blessings before their death. The aged who are unable to do any kind of work are cared by their closest relatives. It is a part of their religious duties to respect and care for the aged. 888 593

PART III.

Earning of Living. The farming is a subsistence type of farming. The people barely make their living and on lean years they have to borrow heavily from the Agricultural Bank or from the local city merchants. The following inventory which was taken from a representative farmer shows more or less the farm enterprise. 241 511

Inventory at the beginning of the year. 511
176 drachmas = $1 1 Oke = 2.82 pounds. [436] [804]

A. Condition of the family.
Members of the family 4 - 2 females and 2 males.
Members below 14 years of age 1, above sixty none.

/66 cont./ 782
are so affected by the circulating stories that they send their [755]
patients to /67/ the Saints as their last resort. [776]
[778]
Crosses and certain signs are carried by strong believers. [751]
The evil eye is strongly believed in and special written prayers [754]
wrapped up in waterproof cloth hang around their necks.

Cleanliness is an asset of the Caucasians and they take weekly 515
baths and change their clothes. The Thracians, who live more 184
the primitive type of life, never bathe their bodies but only their [851]
heads. They still believe that the holy oil which the priest put [178]
on them at their baptism is on their body and bathing may wash [164]
it away. The influence of this belief is less among the younger
generation and in the near future it may disappear. One would
naturally expect more disease and sickness among the filthy
Thracians, but just the opposite is proved by the figures of a survey.
These people do not cooperate so strongly with the doctor and [165] ●
the nurse and still they have the healthiest children, the least
disease and the lowest death rate. The diet of the Thracians is 262
poorer than that of the Caucasians. They seldom cook and eat
mostly raw vegetables, poorly-baked whole wheat bread, but more
/68/ dairy products, such as cheese, milk, and sour milk
(gioghourt).

Their clothing is made out of wool. Men, women, and 291
children, even in the hot summers, wear woolen clothes.

Washing the teeth is unknown among these people, except 515
among those who have had a chance to go to high school or worked [369]
in cities. There was one dentist in the nearby city and the area 759
and the city included had a population of 130,000. He could not
make his living in this population and was planning to move to a
larger city and visit the area once a week.

People often think it is a crazy idea to put tooth paste in the 164
mouth and shine the teeth. Their diet of vegetables, and black [515]
whole wheat bread keeps the teeth shining and healthy. This does [752]
not mean that there are no people with bad teeth, but they are [759]
very scarce and the local experienced dentists do the job without
reward